2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Garhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

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However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 [141] ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[66] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.